

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05

INRE-00 INR-05 SP-02 SS-15 SSO-00 RSC-01 CCO-00 /048 W

----- 092935

Z 232315Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 421

INFO USDEL VLADIVOSTOCK FLASH

AMEMBASSY TUNIS NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T CAIRO 9490

VLADIVOSTOCK FOR THE SECRETARY

FOR THE SECRETARY FORM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

1. FAHMY, WHO HAS NOT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ME ALL DAY, TELEPHONED ME AT A DINNER PARTY AT 2100 GMT THIS EVE. SIRRI, WHO WAS AT SAME PART, HAD TOLD ME THAT FAHMY WOULD PROBABLY CALL ME TO FILL ME IN ON DETAILS OF LAST 24 HOURS OF NEGOTIATIONSWITH HIJACKERS. AS IT TURNED OUT, SIRRI GAVE ME A FEW ADDITONAL DETAILS WHICH FAMY DID NOT MENTION. FAMY ASKED THAT I CONVEY THE FOLLOWING TO YOU AT ONCE:

2. FOR PAST 24 HOURS, GOE HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO WORK OUT RELEASE OF PASSENGERS AND AIRCRAFT. IT AGREED TO SEND ABU IYAD, TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER PLO MEMBER, TO TUNIS TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE HIJACKERS. IN ANSWER TO MY QUERY, FAHMY DENIED THAT ABU IYAD'S ASSOCIATE, IDENTIFIED AS "MAHER" IS ONE OF THE KHARTOUM EIGHT. HE CATEFORICALLY ASSURED ME THAT THE KHARTOUM

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EIGHT ARE ALL HERE IN PRISON.

3. ACCORDING TO GOE'S REPORTS, ABU IYAD'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE TERRORISTS HAVE HAD THEIR UPS AND DOWNS. AS OF 1200 GMT TODAY, AFTER ABU IYAD HAD REPORTED THAT THE HIJACKERS WERE DISTRAUGHT AND MIGHT BLOW UP THE AIRCRAFT WITH ALL OF ITS PASSENGERS, PRESIDENT SADAT AGREED THAT THE AIRCRAFT MIGHT COME TO CAIRO. FAHMY SAID THAT THE EGYPTIAN PLAN WAS TO ATTACK THE AIRCRAFT ONCE IT HAD LANDED EVEN THOUGH THIS MEANT RISKING LIVES OF SOME OF THE PASSENGERS AND CREW. THIS PLAN HAD BEEN CANCELLED WHEN ABU IYAD SUBSEQUENTLY INDICATED NEGOTIATIONS WOULD CONTINUE.

4. GOE, FAHMY CONTINUED, WANTS YOU TO KNOW IT HAS BEEN UNDER INTENSE PRESSURE THESE PAST 24 HOURS. BOURGUIBA, BOUMEDIENNE, FRANGIYA, GENSCHER, CHATTI AND CALLAGHAN HAVE ALL REPEATEDLY APPEALED TO SADAT OR FAHMY TO RELEASE THE CAIRO-HELD TERRORISTS ON "HUMANITARIAN" GROUNDS. GENSCHER'S REPRESENTATIONS BEGAN YESTERDAY EVENING, ACCORDING TO SIRRI, AND THE GERMANS ARE CURRENTLY UPSET THAT THE SINGLE GERMAN NATIONAL ABOARD THE PLANE WAS THE PERSON KILLED BY THE HIJACKERS. THEY ARE BLAMING THE GOE FOR THIS.

5. ALTHOUGH ABU IYAD WAS SUPPOSED TO NEGOTIATE ON THE BASIS OF NO RELEASE OF ANY OF THE CAIRO-HELD TERRORISTS, HE REPORTED LATE THIS AFTERNOON THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO DO SO. SOLE ARRANGMENTS HE WAS ABLE TO WORK OUT WITH THE HIJACKERS, HE CLAIMED, WAS THE RELEASE OF THE ROME FIVE. FACED WITH PRESSURE FROM ALL SIDES, GOE RELUCTANTLY HAD TO AGREE. IT DID SO ON AN EXCEPTIONAL BASIS. AN EGYPTIAN AIRCRAFT WAS SENT AT 1900 GMT WITH THE ROME FIVE ABROAD. FAHMY EMPHASIZED THAT, PRESS REPORTS NOTWITHSTANDING, NONE RPT NONE OF THE KHARTOUM EIGHT ARE AMONG THOSE BEING RELEASED. AS OF THE TIME HE CALLED, FAHMY SAID HE DIDNOT KNOW WHETHER ABU IYAD'S ARRANGEMENT HAD WORKED OUT. (ACCORDING TO SIRRI, EGYPTINS ARE WORRIED-AND RIGHTLY SO-, THAT HIJACKERS MAY, WHEN OFFERED ROME FIVE, DEMAND KHARTOUM EIGHT AS WELL.)

6. FAHMY IDENTIFIED THE HIJACKERS AS BEING FORM THE ABU NIDAL GROUP BASED IN IRAQ. HE STATE THEY ARE FINANCED BY QADHAAFI.
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BOURGUIBA, BOUMEDIENNE, FRANGIYA, SADAT AND OTHER ARAB LEADERS, HE CLAIMS, ARE DISTRUBED ABOUT HIJACKERS. THEY ARE INSISTING THAT THE PLO PURGE FEDAYEEN RANKS OF DISSIDENTS IF IT HOPES TO OBTAIN ANY INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. A MINI-SUMMIT IS TO BE CALLED SHORTLY TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO PREVENT THE RECURRENCE OF TERRORISM BY SUCH SPLINTER GROUPS.

7. FAHMY CONCLUDED BY SAYING HE IS ISSUING A COMPREHENSIVE

"BACKGROUND STATEMENT" IN THE NEXT HALF HOUR OR SO EXPLAINING WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE AND WHY GOE TOOK THE ACTION IT DID. LIBYA WOULD BE SPECIFICALLY CITED THEREIN AS SUPPORTING HIJACKERS. (STATEMENT BEING SENT SEPTTEL.) HOWEVER, HE WANTS YOU TO HAVE THESE ADDITIONAL ACTS, I REMINDED FAHMY THAT THE ROME FIVE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN ATTACKING A PANAM AIRCRAFT AND WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF SEVERAL AMERICAN PASSENGERS ABOARD THE AIRCRAFT. FAHMY SAID HE KNEW THIS, BUT AGAIN STRESSED THAT THE KHARTOUM EIGHT HAVE NOT BEEN AND WILL NOT BE RELEASED.

8. COMMENT: FAHMY IS EMBARRASSED AND WORRIED ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED. HIS COMMENTS AND THE GOE STATEMENTS ARE CLEARLY AN APOLOGIA. THE PRESSURE ON SADAT AND FAHMY HAS DOUBTLESS BEEN INTENSE AND, WHILE GOE EARLIER TOOK POSITION IT WOULD NOT SUBMIT TO HIJACKERS' DEMANDS AND PLACED ITS FAITH IN ABU IYAD'S DETERMINATION AND ABILITY HANDLE MATTER, IT HAS HAD TO COMPROMISE WHEN IT DEVELOPED THAT ABU IYAD COULDN'T OR WOULD NOT PERSUADE HIJACKERS TO RELEASE PASSENGERS AND AIRCRAFT UNCONDITIONALLY. GOE OBVIOUSLY HOPES THAT, SO LONG AS KHARTOUM EIGHT REMAINS IMPRISONED HERE, USG CAN OVERLOOK RELEASE OF ROME FIVE IN ORDER SAVE LIVES OF PASSENGERS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT HIJACKING, PRESS COMMENTS, NEGOTIATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE, TERRORISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO09490
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740340-1010
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741118/aaaaaooz.tel
Line Count: 139
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SCCT
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TUNIS HIJACKING
TAGS: PINS, EG, (FAHMY, ISMAIL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005